

SHAAP

SCOTTISH HEALTH ACTION ON ALCOHOL PROBLEMS
www.shaap.org.uk

Welcome to SHAAP's weekly media monitoring service: 11 February – 18 February 2021

Coronavirus in Scotland: Alcohol sales drop during pandemic but concerns over increase in 'home alone' drinking

<https://www.scotsman.com/health/coronavirus-scotland-alcohol-sales-drop-during-pandemic-concerns-over-increase-home-alone-drinking-3136305>

Alcohol consumption in Scotland during the Covid-19 pandemic has been lower than expected but lone drinking at home has increased, a new report has shown. While alcohol consumption as a whole reduced, charities raised concerns about increases among those who were already drinking more heavily. The findings are included in two Public Health Scotland reports published on Tuesday, which compared the early months of lockdown with the same period in 2019. The increase in lone drinking at home was seen in single adult households, households with three or more adults, and those in full time education. [...] Lead author of the report, Dr Abigail Stevely, Research Associate from the University of Sheffield's School of Health and Related Research, said: *"Our new research finds that alcohol consumption fell overall, in both Scotland and England, as increased drinking in the off-trade did not fully compensate for the reduction in on-trade drinking... Although we find people drank less overall, there is evidence from other studies that heavier drinkers may have increased their consumption during lockdown. It will be therefore important to continue monitoring drinking during the pandemic to prevent additional health problems in future."*

Source: The Scotsman, 16 February 2021

[Public Health Scotland reports: <http://www.healthscotland.scot/health-topics/alcohol/monitoring-and-evaluating-scotlands-alcohol-strategy-mesas> and briefing paper: <https://www.publichealthscotland.scot/downloads/alcohol-sales-and-consumption-in-scotland-during-the-early-stages-of-the-covid-19-pandemic-briefing-paper/>]

Pubs 'might not be able to prevent Covid-19 transmission'

<https://news.stv.tv/scotland/pubs-might-not-be-able-to-prevent-covid-19-transmission>

Pubs might not be able to prevent Covid-19 from spreading, scientists have warned after observing risks in licensed premises last summer. Scottish researchers examined Covid-19 measures in licensed premises in the first study of its kind in the world and found alarming

results. They say blanket closures, curfews or alcohol sale bans could be more likely to be deemed necessary to control the spread if risks cannot be reduced through support or sanctions for pubs and other premises. Their findings will inform governments, public health experts and policymakers in the UK and overseas as they consider the impact of the pandemic on hospitality and the risks of lifting restrictions. The project was conducted in May to August last year in a wide range of licensed premises which reopened following the first nationwide lockdown, operating under Government guidance intended to reduce transmission risk. Researchers found that despite making physical and operational changes on reopening, practices were variable and discovered a number of incidents of greater concern. These included close physical interaction between customers and with staff, which often involved alcohol intoxication and were rarely effectively stopped by staff. [...]

Source: STV News, 16 February 2021

[Research article: [10.15288/jsad.2021.82.42](https://doi.org/10.15288/jsad.2021.82.42); also reported in the [Daily Mirror](#) and [The Scotsman](#)]

'Keep our children safe': Scots parents' drink and drug misuse referrals double in lockdown

<https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/19095197.keep-children-safe-scots-parents-drink-drug-misuse-referrals-double-lockdown/>

The number of parents referred to official agencies over drugs and alcohol misuse has more than doubled since the start of pandemic, a new study has found. In the three months before the first lockdown, there was an average of 26 Scots parents a month referred by the NSPCC in Scotland to Scottish agencies, such as police and local authorities. Now it has soared to 63 a month. Charity sources say that this will be the "tip of the iceberg" as many cases will go unreported. [...] The children's support charity is now calling on the Scottish Government to ensure services for people affected by drug and alcohol addiction take a 'whole family approach'. [...]

Source: The Herald, 17 February 2021

[Also see a report on NSPCC Wales findings from [BBC News](#)]

Most UK pubs could not reopen under April beer garden plan, says industry

<https://www.theguardian.com/business/2021/feb/16/uk-pubs-reopen-april-beer-garden-covid>

More than half of pubs would not reopen and the rest would be at the mercy of the weather, under tentative plans to allow beer garden service from April, the industry trade body has said. The British Beer and Pub Association (BBPA) said 29,000 pubs, about 60%, do not have a big enough garden or outdoor area to welcome drinkers without also needing to open indoor areas. The prediction comes amid speculation that the government will permit pubs to welcome guests outside from April, easing some of the pressure on a sector that has

been among the hardest-hit by the coronavirus pandemic. The BBPA is pushing for permission to serve customers indoors as soon as non-essential shops are allowed to reopen. It said about 75% of pubs have some outdoor space but only 40% could open if restrictions on indoor movement persist. Most of those that could open would not break even due to the logistical challenges and unpredictable April weather, it said. [...]

Source: The Guardian, 16 February 2021

Record number of Brits take part in Dry January following spike in problem drinking

<https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/record-number-brits-take-part-23475518>

A record number of Brits took part in Dry January last month - with charities warning the pandemic has caused a huge spike in problem drinkers. Alcohol Change UK said nearly seven million Britons backed their campaign to quit drinking last month - a huge rise from last year's four million. Participants have been forced to re-evaluate their drinking habits as a last resort following a spike in problem drinking last year. New Office of National Statistics figures show that deaths caused by alcohol hit a new high during the first nine months of 2020. Between January and September, 5,460 deaths were registered with the cause - up 16% on the same months in 2019. [...]

Source: Mirror, 11 February 2021

COVID-19: How lockdown is taking its toll on millions caught in battle with addiction

<https://news.sky.com/story/covid-19-how-lockdown-is-taking-its-toll-on-millions-caught-in-battle-with-addiction-12216562>

The families of those with substance abuse issues have spoken of the immense pressure and danger this lockdown is putting on their lives. The isolation of lockdown is heightening the trauma and mental health issues associated with addiction. Naomi's dad is alcohol and drug dependent. He has lived with numerous substance disorders his whole life, but enjoyed a long period of sobriety until recently. This all changed when the country re-entered lockdown, and he relapsed. He is now recovering in hospital. [...] A survey of the families of substance users by leading charity Adfam shows that, since the first lockdown, 85% of families have struggled more with helping their loved one. About half witnessed an increase in their alcohol or drug use. The Action on Addiction charity says it saw an 86% rise in the number of people seeking help this January compared with last year. [...]

Source: Sky News, 13 February 2021

'My mum was an alcoholic and it was a massive secret'

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/stories-56001534>

Growing up with a parent who has a drinking problem can profoundly affect children in many ways. Children of alcoholics are more likely to suffer from depression, struggle in school, and experience abuse and violence at home. Many find that they are still deeply affected by their parent's drinking as adults - like Becky Ellis Hamilton. [...]

Source: BBC News, 16 February 2021

International COA Week 2021

<https://coa.nacoa.org.uk/about/>

COA Week is a campaign to raise awareness of children affected by parental alcohol problems, celebrated internationally each year during the week in which Valentine's Day falls. In the UK, COA Week is led by the charity Nacoa UK who provide year-round support. [...]

Source: Nacoa UK, February 2021

FG Seanad leader backs call for minimum unit pricing on alcohol

<https://www.irishtimes.com/news/politics/fg-seanad-leader-backs-call-for-minimum-unit-pricing-on-alcohol-1.4485795>

Fine Gael Seanad leader Regina Doherty has supported a call for the Government to introduce alcohol minimum-unit pricing instead of waiting until Northern Ireland does so because that could take years. She said *"we talk about doing things when the time is ideal" but because of the delays in the North "perhaps we should not wait. We should lead by example as we have done very successfully with other public health measures."* The former minister backed Fianna Fail Senator Ollie Crowe who warned that it could be well over two years before Northern Ireland is in a position to introduce minimum unit pricing. Mr Crowe said Ireland could afford to wait that long *"given the impact alcohol is currently having"*. [...]

Source: The Irish Times, 15 February 2021

A Guide to Lisbon's Forthcoming Managed Alcohol Program

<https://filtermag.org/lisbon-portugal-managed-alcohol-program/>

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis, Portuguese officials have worked to ensure supports are in place for unhoused people at risk of experiencing alcohol withdrawal symptoms. But one promising alcohol harm reduction program has yet to get off the ground due to economic barriers. [...]

Source: FilterMag, 17 February 2021

Ian Hamilton: Alcohol related deaths are on the rise, but we remain a nation in denial

<https://blogs.bmj.com/bmj/2021/02/11/ian-hamilton-alcohol-related-deaths-are-on-the-rise-but-we-remain-a-nation-in-denial/>

The UK is stuck in a deadly catch-22 where access to help for alcohol addiction is harder, while people drinking at hazardous levels have increased their consumption, writes Ian Hamilton. We are a nation in denial when it comes to the harms of alcohol. Even the recent report from the Office for National Statistics showing a new record in the number of alcohol related deaths is unlikely to shift our long held love affair with this drug. From January to September 2020, 5460 people lost their lives to this substance, an increase of 16.4% on the same period the year before. Although this covers the start of the pandemic, most of these deaths would have been triggered by years of excess drinking as three quarters were due to liver disease rather than acute poisoning. The UK had problems with harmful levels of alcohol consumption before the pandemic, but unfortunately covid has amplified these risks for some groups. [...]

Source: BMJ Opinion, 11 February 2021

Low-and-no alcohol drinks brands foresee a 'boom time' when pubs reopen

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/food-and-drink/features/low-and-no-alcohol-drinks-brands-foresee-boom-time-pubs-reopen/>

The prospect of a booze ban, and the nation's changing drinking habits, could play into the hands of 0% beer and spirits makers [...]

Source: The Telegraph, 11 February 2021 [*Subscription / Free Trial*]

Sweden Extends Alcohol Ban as Decline in Covid-19 Cases Stalls

<https://www.bloombergquint.com/onweb/sweden-extends-alcohol-ban-as-decline-in-covid-19-cases-stalls>

Sweden has extended an evening ban on alcohol sales, as the spread of the coronavirus remains high and the country sees an increasing number of Covid-19 cases caused by the more contagious virus variant. [...]

Source: BloombergQuint, 12 February 2021

Matt Hancock lays out plan for reorganisation of NHS in England

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2021/feb/11/matt-hancock-lays-out-his-plan-for-wholesale-reorganisation-of-nhs>

Matt Hancock has laid out his plan for a wholesale reorganisation of the NHS in England which will centralise power in ministerial hands. The plan has broad Tory support but Labour questioned the timing of the move, with the health service still reeling from coronavirus.

Announcing the blueprint – which undoes much of the last structural change in NHS England brought in under David Cameron – the health secretary told MPs that it was intended to better integrate health and social care and do away with irksome bureaucracy. Saying the plans had been worked out with NHS staff and local authorities, Hancock was nonetheless open about the newly top-down approach to managing the health system. “*Medical matters are matters for ministers,*” Hancock told MPs. [...]

Source: The Guardian, 11 February 2021

Australia records highest month in history for alcohol retailer turnover in December

<https://fare.org.au/australia-records-highest-month-in-history-for-alcohol-retailer-turnover-in-december/>

There is growing concern about the impact of increases in retail alcohol sales during the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as the influence of largely unregulated alcohol advertising. This was spotlighted in the Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education’s report, *Alcohol Retail During COVID-19*, released today, which found that Australia registered its highest month ever for alcohol retailer turnover in December, close to an eye-watering \$2 billion. Recently released Australian Bureau of Statistics data shows alcohol retailer turnover in Australia increased by \$3.3 billion from 2019 to 2020, reaching a record \$15.6 billion in 2020 which represents an increase of 26.7 per cent. [...]

Source: Foundation for Alcohol Research & Education (FARE), 12 February 2021

[FARE’s *Alcohol Retail During COVID-19* Report: <https://fare.org.au/wp-content/uploads/Alcohol-retail-industry-during-COVID-19.pdf>]

How the alcohol industry views the Covid experience

<https://www.dbrecoveryresources.com/2021/02/how-the-alcohol-industry-views-the-covid-experience/>

The alcohol-industry funded Portman Group is posting blogs to chart the experience of Covid-19 for the alcohol industry, looking at the impact of the pandemic and the actions by key industry players. [end]

Source: DB Recovery Resources, 18 February 2021

Abstinence advice at antenatal appointments improves outcomes

<https://www.ias.org.uk/news/abstinence-advice-at-antenatal-appointments-improves-outcomes/>

New research published in *BMC Pregnancy and Childbirth* suggests that midwife advice about the low risk alcohol guidelines for pregnant women beyond the initial booking appointment can ‘*lead to improved outcomes for women and infants*’. Current medical

advice – announced by the UK Chief Medical Officers in 2016 – is that the safest approach for those who are (or think they may be) pregnant is to avoid alcohol. Funded by the Institute of Alcohol Studies, a research team investigated UK midwives' practices regarding those guidelines, and the factors influencing their implementation during antenatal appointments. [...]

Source: Institute of Alcohol Studies (IAS), 17 February 2021

[Research article: [10.1186/s12884-021-03583-1](https://doi.org/10.1186/s12884-021-03583-1)]

Increased alcohol consumption during the pandemic: explained

<https://www.nationalelfservice.net/mental-health/substance-misuse/alcohol-consumption-pandemic/>

Alcohol is both a sneaky and effective drug: sneaky because problems take years to manifest and effective as it provides an instant change in the way we feel and think. Understanding how people have used alcohol during the Covid-19 pandemic is the focus of a new study by Atte Oksanen and colleagues (2020). They aimed to explore how people's relationship with alcohol prior to the pandemic had changed during the early stages of the global pandemic. [...]

Source: Ian Hamilton (The Mental Elf), 12 February 2021

[Research article: [10.1093/alcalc/aga124](https://doi.org/10.1093/alcalc/aga124)]

Ride-sharing services linked to binge drinking

<https://news.umich.edu/ride-sharing-services-linked-to-binge-drinking/>

Ride-sharing services like Uber and Lyft might help decrease drunk driving accidents and deaths, but they also are associated with an increase in binge drinking, according to a new study. *“There’s fairly strong evidence that this expanded supply of transportation is allowing people to do less driving while drunk,”* said co-author Jeffrey McCullough [...] *“But at the same time, we found that it is making it easier for people to engage in alcohol consumption particularly binge drinking, which is the worst kind of drinking.”* [...] Researchers found no association between Uber entry into a market and the frequency with which people consumed modest amounts of alcohol generally, but found that binge drinking increased by 4% in high-density markets after Uber became available. [...]

Source: University of Michigan News, 12 February 2021

[Research article: [10.2196/15402](https://doi.org/10.2196/15402)]

Why Do So Many People With Complex Needs Die Young?

<https://www.russellwebster.com/why-do-so-many-people-with-complex-needs-die-young/>

Last month Fuse, the Centre for Translational Research in Public Health, working in collaboration with Fulfilling Lives Newcastle Gateshead and its peer research network published a report which explores why so many people with multiple and complex needs are dying and dying early, in order to find ways to identify those at risk and to prevent unnecessary deaths in the future. [...] Researchers found that those with lived experience of multiple and complex needs had vast experience of loss and this, coupled with a lack of hope that things could change for the better, meant they had become desensitised to death. The study also found that mental ill health when combined with drug and alcohol problems, and poor coordination and collaboration between support services, increase vulnerability and the risk of people dying prematurely. [...]

Source: Russell Webster, 11 January 2021

[Fuse and Fulfilling Lives Report:

<http://www.fuse.ac.uk/media/sites/researchwebsites/fuse/Mortality%20and%20MCN%20Report%20Oct2020.pdf>]

Mental health disorders and alcohol misuse more common in LGB people

<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/news/2021/feb/mental-health-disorders-and-alcohol-misuse-more-common-lgb-people>

Lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB*) people are significantly more likely to have mental health conditions and report alcohol and drug misuse than heterosexual people – finds a new study led by UCL researchers in collaboration with the University of East Anglia and City, University. The findings, published today in *Psychological Medicine*, come despite apparently more tolerant societal attitudes towards same-sex relationships. Given this continued disparity, the report’s authors are now calling for Government action to ensure equity in health and social care services. [...] Alcohol misuse was highest in lesbian and gay people, at 37%, compared with bisexual people at 31%, and heterosexuals, at 24%. [...]

Source: UCL News, 17 February 2021

[Research article: [10.1017/S0033291721000052](https://doi.org/10.1017/S0033291721000052)]

Partners or Opponents? Alcohol Industry Strategy and the 2016 Revision of the U.K. Low-Risk Drinking Guidelines

<https://www.jsad.com/doi/full/10.15288/jsad.2021.82.84>

“The present case adds new insights into the political strategies of alcohol industry actors to undermine public health, providing evidence of confrontational tactics. It draws attention to the failure of self-regulatory regimes to incorporate basic public health messaging.”

Source: *Journal of Studies on Alcohol and Drugs*, 15 February 2021

Drinking, smoking, and drug use linked to premature heart disease in the young

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2021-02-drug-linked-premature-heart-disease.html>

Recreational drinking, smoking, and drug use is linked to premature heart disease in young people, particularly younger women, finds research published online in the journal *Heart*. Those who regularly use 4 or more substances are 9 times as likely to be affected, the findings indicate. [...] They drew on information supplied to the 2014-2015 nationwide Veterans Affairs Healthcare database and the Veterans with premaTure Atherosclerosis (VITAL) registry. [...] Recreational use of any substance was independently associated with a higher likelihood of premature and extremely premature heart disease. Patients with premature heart disease were more likely to smoke (63% vs 41%), drink (32% vs 15%), and to use cocaine (13% vs 2.5%), amphetamines (3% vs 0.5%), and cannabis (12.5% vs 3%). [...]

Source: Medical Xpress, 15 February 2021

[Research article: [10.1136/heartjnl-2020-318119](https://doi.org/10.1136/heartjnl-2020-318119); Editorial: [10.1136/heartjnl-2020-318856](https://doi.org/10.1136/heartjnl-2020-318856)]

Alcohol use is worryingly high among Nigerian students: here's who is most at risk

<https://theconversation.com/alcohol-use-is-worryingly-high-among-nigerian-students-heres-who-is-most-at-risk-154887>

[...W]e surveyed a large sample of university students across six Nigerian regions. We wanted to know how prevalent alcohol use was among students and how this differed by gender, age and geographical location. [...] We found that about a third of the respondents were users of alcohol and about 9% were dependent on it. The pattern of alcohol use differed significantly across age groups and locations. And students who perceived themselves as unable to handle challenges in their lives were more likely to use alcohol. These findings are a warning for universities to pay close attention to students' emotional challenges and make sure counselling and prevention programmes are available to them. [...]

Source: The Conversation, 17 February 2021

[Research article: [10.1080/14659891.2021.1875067](https://doi.org/10.1080/14659891.2021.1875067)]

SHAAP Blog: Alcohol monopolies

<https://www.shaap.org.uk/blog/332-alcohol-monopolies.html>

Scotland has made progress in reducing harm from alcohol and an important part of that approach has been attention to regulating the price, availability and marketing of alcohol, known as the World Health Organization's '*Best Buys*'. However, the Scottish off-trade alcohol market remains lightly regulated in comparison to many countries. Here, Robin Room discusses international examples of alcohol monopolies. [...]

Source: SHAAP, 12 February 2021

PhD Symposium Session 4.1: Mood and Affect

<https://www.addiction-ssa.org/phd-symposium-session-4-1-mood-and-affect/>

This session in the SSA PhD Symposium focused on the relationship between mood factors and alcohol consumption. [...]

Source: Society for the Study of Addiction (SSA), 17 February 2021

ADDICTION LIVES: Harry Shapiro

<https://www.addiction-ssa.org/knowledge-hub/addiction-lives-harry-shapiro/>

In this occasional series in conjunction with the SSA's journal Addiction, we record the views and personal experiences of people who have especially contributed to the evolution of ideas in the journal's field of interest. In this episode Harry Shapiro talks about his time working in addiction. From the Institute for the Study of Drug Dependence (ISDD) in 1979 to DrugScope and DrugWise. Harry also talks about how addiction treatment and policies have changed over that time. He also comments on the future of addiction treatment and his recent work on e-cigarettes. [...]

Source: Society for the Study of Addiction (SSA), 17 February 2021

Raising alcohol taxes in the Budget – it's the Chancellor's duty to public health

<https://ahauk.org/raising-alcohol-taxes-in-the-budget-its-the-chancellors-duty-to-public-health/>

The Alcohol Health Alliance UK and its members are campaigning for a rise in alcohol duty in the next Budget. What difference does this make, and can higher prices really reduce alcohol harm? In this blog Colin Shevills, Director of Balance the North East Alcohol Office, explains why a rise in alcohol duty not only improves public health but also helps pubs and public finances. [...]

Source: Alcohol Health Alliance UK, 12 February 2021

Mechanisms of Change in Addiction Recovery Revisited

<http://www.williamwhitepapers.com/blog/2021/02/mechanisms-of-change-in-addiction-recovery-revisited.html>

In an earlier blog posted in 2017, I offered some preliminary observations on mechanisms of change in recovery and the variation in such mechanisms across pathways of recovery, stages of recovery, clinical populations, and cultural contexts. A recent collaboration with Dr. Marc Galanter in designing a study to investigate such mechanisms of change among members of Narcotics Anonymous has stimulated further thinking about the precise catalytic elements that contribute to addiction recovery. [...]

Source: Selected Papers of William L. White, 11 February 2021

Need rehab? How can we hinder you?

<https://recoveryreview.blog/2021/02/13/need-rehab-how-can-we-hinder-you/>

Although the signs are good that journeys to residential rehabilitation in Scotland are about to get a lot easier, there are still some challenges to face. We could quadruple capacity, but if the pathways are not there or blocks exist, more places will make little difference. Not everyone is a fan of rehab and in some areas, gatekeepers seem to hold the keys tightly to their chests, sometimes understandably because allocated resources are scanty, but for other reasons too. [...]

Source: Recovery Review, 13 February 2021

How to avoid alcohol relapse: tips for when addiction resurfaces

<https://ahauk.org/how-to-avoid-alcohol-relapse-tips-for-when-addiction-resurfaces/>

Recovery from alcohol addiction can be a long and difficult process; with relapse into old drinking habits common for many. In this blog Andy Ryan, Head of Recovery and Addiction Services at addiction charity Changing Lives, shares his top tips for how to avoid alcohol relapse. [...]

Source: Alcohol Health Alliance UK, 11 February 2021

Comparing death counts, Lock Down drinking and Long Covid

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m000s7lr>

[...] There have been reports that we are drinking more in Lock Down. We examine the evidence. [...]

Source: BBC Radio 4 ('More or Less'), 17 February 2021

World's oldest known beer factory may have been unearthed in Egypt

<https://www.theguardian.com/science/2021/feb/13/worlds-oldest-known-beer-factory-may-have-been-unearthed-in-egypt>

American and Egyptian archaeologists have unearthed what could be the oldest known beer factory at one of the most prominent archaeological sites of ancient Egypt, a top antiquities official said on Saturday. Mostafa Waziri, secretary general of the Supreme Council of Antiquities, said the factory was found in Abydos, an ancient burial ground located in the desert west of the Nile River, more than 450km (280 miles) south of Cairo. He said the factory apparently dates back to the region of King Narmer, who is widely known for his unification of ancient Egypt at the beginning of the first dynastic period (3150BC-2613BC). [...]

Source: The Guardian, 13 February 2021

